



THE FALL

HOW WE GOT TANGLED



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INTRODUCTION TO LIFE UNTANGLED

Did you know God cares about all the big stuff and the little stuff in your life, because He cares about YOU? He knows your struggles. Your hurts. Your wounds.

He wants to show you the source of your mess (because we ALL have mess). And then, He wants you to trust Him to lead you to a place of healing and hope. He is eager to help you learn to depend on Him for ALL things!

Welcome to Life Untangled, where God's love meets our chaos!

We know that most people, even Christians, can feel bogged down and tangled up with the circumstances of life. The writer of Hebrews talks about how sin and emotional wounds have tangled us up so much that we're not able to run this race we call life:

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

That first verse says to lay aside, or let go. You might be thinking, "I tried to let go, and I can't"!

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Letting go happens when we more fully understand the amazing gifts God gave us in Jesus, and the wonderful changes He made in us when we got saved.

In this new e-book series, you will see how we were not only designed to become His children through salvation, but to depend on Him as our actual source of life. We will discover our true selves, and we will see how doing life God's way is the best way!

No matter where you are, He loves you, mess and all, and He's on your side.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THIS E-BOOK?

In this ebook, the third in our “Life Untangled” series, we take a look at what happened in the Garden of Eden to mess everything up!

In the Garden, God gave Adam the freedom to choose. He could eat from every tree, with the exception of only one – the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He warned Adam that if he chose to eat from that particular tree, he would die. Despite God’s warning, Adam chose to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The result was immediate and devastating. In that moment, Adam died a spiritual death, and as his descendants, that death was passed on to us. Along with this spiritual death, a whole bunch of other ugly consequences followed.

Spoiler alert: You do know that God was not thrown off by this big wrench in His design, right? He had a plan. You see, He always had a plan. From our human viewpoint, Adam may have messed things up, but God knew what Adam would choose all along.

ADAM CHOSE TO EAT FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

ADAM’S FAILURE WAS NOT THE END OF THE STORY ...

HOW DID WE GET INTO THIS MESS? ADAM, EVE, AND THE TREE.

Let's go back to the Garden of Eden, shortly after God created Adam and Eve.

What was life like in the Garden before the Fall? Close your eyes and try to picture it. Can you see the beauty, touch the animals, taste the fruit, hear the quietness...?

All Adam and Eve knew was a perfect environment and union with God!

They depended on Him for everything. No worries about what to eat or wear. No worries about conflict - just living in peace and contentment in a beautiful garden. No thoughts of yesterday or tomorrow, just living in the moment with their Friend and Guide.

They were free from fear, problems or uncertainty that would hold them back from a close, intimate relationship with God. They walked with Him, talked with Him, learned from Him, laughed with Him, felt loved by Him. They enjoyed each other. Adam and Eve were comfortable in their own skin - safe and secure.

And then, with one choice, ALL of that changed. Forever. Can you imagine how that must have felt for them? How jarring and terrible and earth-shaking that shift must have been? In an instant, their lives were turned upside down and backwards:

Peace was destroyed, fear was born
Acceptance was gone, rejection stepped in
Safety and security disappeared, uncertainty grew
Honor was dissolved, shame took hold
Fulfillment now unobtainable, emptiness prevailed
Life was lost, death reigned

This is the mess we inherited.

Remember that God had told Adam that he could eat from every tree--except for one: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God also told him that if he ate from it, he would surely die. Adam, fully aware of the consequences, chose to eat.

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17, NKJV).

We know that Satan was crafty and succeeded in tempting Adam and deceiving Eve. God had given them both free will, and they chose poorly.

Why do you think God gives us choices? Take a moment to reflect.

Adam’s choice to disobey God changed them and the world forever — especially the relationship between God and man.

Absent of God-life, Adam and Eve had to depend on their own knowledge to navigate life.

They now had to work hard for food, clothing, and shelter. They had to find ways to handle their new conflict. Everything was different. Instead of living life as God led them, they had to navigate the day based on what they knew – be it good or evil. The Tree of

Knowledge was their new source for navigating life instead of God. He was present but the connection was lost.

As descendants of Adam we were born into the same situation: born apart from God with only our knowledge to get us through life.

“When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” (Genesis 5:3).

It almost doesn't seem fair, does it? After all, it's not really our fault; Adam's the one who disobeyed God! Yet we were born into a fallen world and have to find our own way of life, apart from God as we eat from our own Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God is present, still loves us and exercises His providence, but at this point in history God does not indwell man. Since Adam, this is the same for everyone until we encounter Jesus.

What a mess! We are born into this life absent of God-life.

We are left to our own knowledge to live our life. Knowledge of God can be part of our Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. However, having knowledge of God is NOT the same as being born again into the family of God. Union with Christ enables us to eat from The Tree of Life.

Ask God to show you ways that your own resources have failed – especially in relationships.

OUR MESSY WORLD

The Fall didn't just impact mankind, but the world changed too. On that dreadful day in the Garden, sin, strife, pain, suffering, and death entered the world. Paradise ended and trouble began.

Genesis 3 tells us that work would become laborious (v. 17), childbirth would become painful (v. 16), there would be disease and hardship and death (v. 19).

Again, this did not catch God off-guard.
God's love for us did not change.
He is still with us and around us.
He is with us in the mess.
He will bring a permanent solution...but first more of the mess.

Let's take a closer look at what happened inside of us.

WHAT HAPPENED INSIDE OF US?

Do you remember when we looked at God’s design of the three part man — spirit, soul, and body — in our ebook *Our Design: Untangling Our Concept of Ourselves*? What happened to these three parts because of the Fall?

THE SPIRIT

Adam’s choice to live independently from God caused a **separation from God, leaving him and his descendants spiritually dead - without God-life.** Adam and Eve were no longer connected to God as the source of life. God was still present, but did not indwell them.

According to Romans 5:12, everyone since Adam, was born spiritually dead.

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

THE BODY

In addition to spiritual death, Adam’s body also began aging. Disease and illness would now be a part of life and eventually lead to physical death.

But something else would happen in the physical realm. **Adam's brain no longer just stored the goodness of God. After eating from the Tree of knowledge, both good and evil thoughts would be in his mind.** Through the senses he took every word, every taste, smell, touch and all that he saw and decided if it was good or evil. His knowledge was not always correct.

This is also our reality. Our brain takes in everything around us and our mind processes it and we form opinions about God, the world, life and our self. Often our conclusions do not reflect truth. It is what we believe, but it is not always true.

WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL?

Adam's body, through the senses, takes in information and the soul draws conclusions. His soul is the part of him that thinks, feels, and makes choices.

Acting independently of God was the choice Adam made. **He felt the full weight of trying to make life work.** It would all come by the sweat of his brow. He had to figure out what was good and what was evil. He had to continue to deal with the consequences of his choices. This put him under tremendous pressure to make decisions in order to avoid pain, suffering, guilt and shame. Surviving was his new way of life.

When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil their spirit died and they were no longer connected to truth. Also, their soul became tainted. Their thoughts were no longer connected to the truth of God. Instantly their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors changed.

We see that in Genesis 3:7-13:

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

One of Adam and Eve’s first reactions was to hide from God.

We’ve all seen this in young kids, haven’t we? They do something they know they shouldn’t, and then they hide or pretend they have no idea what’s going on!

They heard God coming and they were afraid of Him. Obviously, their belief about God had changed! They no longer experienced the safety and security of the Father. They were afraid of Him. Can you imagine how they must have felt?

They hid. They were ashamed. Hiding was their way to stay safe.

Adam and Eve sought self-protection with fig leaves. **They tried to find safety in hiding.**

They were now experiencing fear, shame, dread, and hopelessness. They no longer believed the truth about God. Their thinking was off. Their feelings of fear and shame caused them to seek a hiding place.

God designed mankind to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Adam and Eve did their best to avoid pain.

But it's not just Adam's experience, it's also ours. We find ourselves in that same boat. Unintentionally or intentionally our brain takes in everything and with our mind we draw conclusions based on our knowledge. Our knowledge is often skewed. We do whatever is least painful and most pleasurable.

Since we were born into this fallen world apart from God, we started out life eating from our own Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Our brain took in every word, every look, and every action of everyone around us. And for some, those experiences were very painful.

As children we are great observers and poor interpreters of information. All of us have had experiences that have caused us to believe lies about God, our self and others and we all have our own brand of trying to cope with those beliefs.

What is your brand of coping? Withdrawal? People-Pleasing? Indulgence?

From birth we learn to get what we want because we have a built-in sense of survival. As we get older we have experiences, draw conclusions and actually formulate a belief system. This is usually not a conscious thing; it's just what we do. Sadly, our conclusions are often inaccurate which creates a skewed belief system resulting in faulty thinking and behavior that is based on lies.

We began to exercise our will based on our own distorted knowledge, perceptions, reasoning and feelings. Our thoughts are now skewed and therefore our will is no longer in alignment with God's will.

Before you knew Jesus, what were your fears? What did you believe about God? About yourself? What did you do to feel safe and avoid pain? In what ways did you try to gain love and acceptance?

One of the messages I believed was, “I am stupid” and “I just can’t get ‘it’ right.” I believed that I will always fall short; therefore I turned to people pleasing and overachieving to try to overcome my lack of ability. This struggle is common to us all. **As we grapple with distorted and confused thinking we develop beliefs and strategies in an effort to get our needs met apart from God.**

What we believe determines how we feel and how we live out our lives in relationship with God and others.

Take a moment to reflect. Have you ever tried to hide from God after making a bad choice? What were you feeling?

But remember: God always had a plan. In Genesis 3, God promises the restoration of life. Scripture reminds us that, even though we’re born as sinners, He would provide a way to redeem us. He would give us another chance to experience the Tree of Life. It is called the cross of Christ.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

God was still present. God did not change, but Adam’s experience of God was altered.

Yet this was where God's mercy became evident. He replaced Adam's fig leaves with animal skins. This was the first glimpse of God's ultimate restoration.

When we aren't depending on God, we default to depending on all the coping mechanisms and resources, knowledge and experiences we've acquired - this is the flesh. This is what it looks like to act independently of God.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Fall ended the perfect garden paradise God had designed. But thankfully, it didn't take God by surprise. It did, however, bring sin and death into the world!

"When Adam sinned, the entire world was affected. Sin entered human experience, and death was the result. And so death followed this sin, casting its shadow over all humanity, because all have sinned" (Romans 5:12, TPT).

How has sin impacted your life?

In what ways have you experienced negative impact from relying on your flesh (coping mechanisms) in relationships, decisions, and other life choices?

The death Scripture is referring to came in a spiritual sense (separation from God and being spiritually dead) and the physical sense (the eventual death of the body). The death our soul feels is usually in relationship to others. We can all relate to this on an experiential level. Can you identify with any of the following?

Broken relationships
Rejection
Betrayal
Abuse
Anger and frustration
Pain
Suffering
Sickness
Conflict
Hate
Fear
Striving

No doubt you could add many things to this list.

Being spiritually born apart from God, we have to do everything out of our own strength and self-reliance in order to fulfill our God-given needs and get through life. This is a life living from our soul – our own Tree of Knowledgeof frustration and conflict!

This causes us to miss out on the things God provides for us when we are in union with Him, like the fruit of the Spirit, *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”* (Galatians 5:22), and an easy yoke and light burden (Matthew 11:30)--and freedom!

“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

The good news is that Adam and Eve’s decision was not the end of the story, meaning it’s not the end of yours or mine, either!

Paul tells us in Romans,

“For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

You see, God always had a plan. His plan was to make us righteous through Jesus’ death on the Cross and give us His Life so we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

In our next ebook, *Our Deliverance: How Jesus Untangled Us*, we look at what Jesus did to reconcile us to God.